

from lignocellulose fiber-containing chip feed material comprising the steps of:

first conditioning said fiber containing feed material while conveyed through a first chamber having an environment of saturated steam at an elevated pressure in the range of about 10-25 [psi] psig to produce conditioned feed material;

conveying and compressing the conditioned feed material through a second chamber having an environment of saturated steam at elevated pressure in the range of about 10-25 [psi] psig to produce a pretreated material having destructured fibers without significant breakage across grain boundaries;

preheating the pretreated material in a third chamber in an environment of saturated steam at a pressure above 75 [psi] psig and above the glass transition temperature of the lignin in the material, for a period of time less than 30 seconds;

conveying the pre-heated material to the inlet of a primary disc refiner operating at a pressure above 75 [psi] psig and a temperature above the glass transition temperature of the lignin; and

refining the material at a disc speed of rotation that is greater than 1500 rpm for a double disc refiner or greater than 1800 rpm for a single disc refiner.

#### **REMARKS**

The foregoing amendments make explicit the position consistently taken by applicant during prosecution and appeal, that all values indicated as "psi", refer to pounds per square inch gage pressure (psig), for reason that are of record. In addition, the current status of another application that was pending at the time of the filing of the subject application, has been inserted.

In the telephone interview, Examiner Alvo indicated that the essence of the foregoing amendments is supported by the original specification and thus such amendment would not constitute new matter.

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It is applicant's further understanding that upon entry of the amendment, the claims as amended will be reconsidered by the examiner.

A clean set of the replacement paragraph and a clean set of all pending claims appears after this signature page.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marc SABOURIN



L. James Ristas, Reg. No. 28,663  
Alix, Yale & Ristas LLP  
Attorney for Applicant

Date: April 4, 2003  
750 Main Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06103-2721  
Tel. No.: (860) 527-9211

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